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General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

99th plenary meeting
Monday, 24 May 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ka (Senegal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Observance of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): This afternoon, before turning to the item before the General Assembly, I should like to say a few words about the commemoration of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, which is to be observed at the United Nations tomorrow, 25 May.

The achievements of the United Nations in decolonization represent an important contribution to a world of peace, in which fundamental human rights and the dignity of the human person are respected and affirmed and in which social progress and better standards of life are promoted.

The decolonization process has had a significant impact on the history of the twentieth century. Since 1946, when the first list of Non-Self-Governing Territories at the United Nations numbered 72, over 60 colonial Territories have exercised their right to self-determination and attained independence, taking their rightful place in the community of sovereign nations, many of them as Members of the United Nations.

And yet the process is not over. Seventeen Non-Self-Governing Territories remain under the consideration of this Assembly, and, in particular, under the careful scrutiny of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which, since its establishment in 1961, has closely monitored progress in the implementation of the Declaration.

On this day, we reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to the Non-Self-Governing Territories to ensure that the decisions the world body has taken on their behalf, with a view to safeguarding the interests of the Territories, are fulfilled. On this occasion, we also reiterate our appeal for the cooperation of the administering Powers with the Special Committee in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions and call on programmes and institutions of the United Nations to assist the Non-Self-Governing Territories in enhancing their standard of living and promoting their self-sufficiency.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/53/835/Add.5 and A/53/835/Add.6)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In letters contained in documents A/53/835/Add.5 and

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

A/53/835/Add.6, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in document A/53/835 and addenda 1 to 4, Cape Verde and Ecuador have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 47 (Election of the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/53/963)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In his note, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that, in order to enable the Assembly to consider his recommendation contained in his identical letters dated 17 May 1999 addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (document A/53/960), it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 47.

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to reopen consideration of agenda item 47, entitled "Election of the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994"?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of the request of the Secretary-General contained in document A/53/963?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We will thus proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 47 (*continued*)

Election of the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/53/960)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/53/964)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In connection with this item, I wish to refer to the letter dated 17 May 1999 from the Secretary-General, contained in document A/53/960, to which is annexed a letter dated 14 May 1999 from the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. In his letter, the President of the International Criminal Tribunal requests that the term of office of Judge Lennart Aspegren be extended until the completion of the *Rutaganda* and *Musema* cases, that is until 30 January 2000 at the latest.

In a letter dated 19 May 1999 addressed to the President of the General Assembly and contained in document A/53/964, the President of the Security Council transmits the text of Council resolution 1241 (1999) of 19 May 1999, whereby the Council

> "Endorses the recommendation of the Secretary-General that Judge Aspegren, once replaced as a member of the Tribunal, finish the *Rutaganda* and *Musema* cases which he has begun before expiry of his term of office; and takes note of the intention of the Tribunal to finish these cases if possible before 31 January 2000."

Regarding the programme budget implications of the recommendation of the Secretary-General, I wish to draw the attention of members to the penultimate paragraph of the letter of the Secretary-General contained in document A/53/960, in which the Secretary-General states that he has been advised by the Registry of the International Tribunal that the budgetary costs of the extension which is being requested of Judge Aspegren's term of office are estimated to be $261,800, and that it is envisaged that the Tribunal may be able to meet those costs from within the 1999 appropriation adopted for the Tribunal by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/213 of 18 December 1998.

I propose that, if there is no objection, the Assembly should decide to endorse the recommendation of the Secretary-General, which was endorsed by the Security Council.

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 47.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.